

**ABSTRACT**

A Gram-negative bacterium useful for genetically engineering plants is provided. The Gram-negative bacterium contains, as part of genome, an inducible regulatory sequence operatively linked to a nucleotide sequence encoding a levansucrase.

5 Alternatively, the Gram-negative bacterium comprises a recombinant nucleic acid construct containing an inducible regulatory sequence operatively linked to a nucleotide sequence encoding a levansucrase. Also provided are recombinant nucleic acid constructs comprising an inducible regulatory sequence operatively coupled to a nucleotide sequence encoding a levansucrase and a method for transforming plants using the Gram-negative  
10 bacterium of the present invention.

0924101-080701